

# Practices That Work!

### Reason for starting the innovative practice

Lake Bato is the source of livelihood of people around the lake as well as people from adjacent municipalities. Fish and other lake products were abundant in previous years; before the occurrence of various problems in lake which ranged from human to natural causes. These include illegal fishing, fast siltation of the lake bottom, massive fish kill, reclamation of the lake shore for agriculture, mushrooming of fish cages in the lake, and recently, the blooming of water lily which covered the entire surface of the lake. This prompted the parish priest of Bato, Fr. Dan Rafael, to advocate a clean up program for the lake which started from the "Oplan Alis Water Lily" project, and later on supported by the LGU.

Illegal fishing, using electricity and dynamite, was also reported rampant. There were also cases of poaching in the fish cage projects.

### Role of Implementing Organization

The Bato parish priest started the advocacy program for the sustainable development of the lake. This was later supported by the local chief executives of Municipalities of Bato, Camarines Sur and Libon, Albay.

### How it works

Because of the El Niño phenomenon in 1998, lake water level decreased and nutrient turn over is enhanced. This condition favored the blooming of water lily and other flora in the lake. Flora bloom later covered the entire lake surface, constricting fish cages and preventing the navigation of fish farmers to and from their fish cage projects. Fish cage operators reported that their fish stock were gasping for air at the surface water every morning until about 9-10 A.M. This indicated that the dissolved oxygen content in water decreased especially during night time when respiration of both plants and animals in water is high.

The advocacy of lake clean up continued and was also included in the priest's homily during the mass. Later, the parish priest coordinated with the local chief executives of the two municipalities and planned for the rehabilitation program for the lake.

### How barriers/obstacles were overcome

A multi-sectoral participatory prioritization workshop was held on September 30, 1999 where participants identified and prioritized projects for the lake which included: fish sanctuary establishment, livelihood projects, and a mini-ice plant and cold storage facility.

### General Information

#### Innovative Practice Name

LGUs of Bato, Camarines Sur and Libon, Albay working for Lake Bato Resource Management Program (LBRMP)

#### Location

Lake Bato, Bato, Camarines Sur

#### Date Started

January 2000

#### Implementing Office Address

Lake Bato Parish Social Action Center,  
Bato Camarines, Sur

#### Contact Person/Address/Tel./E-mail

Hon. Jaime T. Gonzales and Hon. John  
Dycoco, Municipal Mayors of Bato,  
Camarines Sur and Libon, Albay

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Other projects were also discussed, i.e., infrastructure, fish cage production, dredging of lake, and the formulation of fishery laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances.

The Technical Working Group (TWG) of each municipality reviewed their old fishery ordinances and rules and regulations to update and conform with the provisions of Republic Act 8550, the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998. This was done in preparation for the formulation, adoption, and implementation of unified Fisheries Ordinance for both LGUs towards sustainable development of Lake Bato and in support of the Lake Bato Resource Management Program and the protection of the interest of the fisherfolks as well. The two LGUs have jurisdiction over Lake Bato because considering the geographical and political boundaries which they both share over the lake. Because of this, both LGUs want to come up with a unified fisheries ordinance.

Reports of illegal activities in the lake reached the office of the two LGUs and in response to this problem, they assigned personnel composed of representatives from the tax collection unit and police force to monitor illegal fishing activities, poaching and fish cage inventory in the area.

### **Details of benefits and results**

The TWG had the chance to talk with the people along the lake shore areas during their data gathering activities in the Resource Management Appraisal. According to them, the people are willing to support the LBRMP program implementation to improve the condition of Lake Bato.

Mayors Jaime Gonzales and John Dycoco, and Fr. Dan Rafael coordinated with each other to formulate programs towards sustainable management of the lake Bato resources. The establishment of an office of the Lake Bato Resource Management Program at the Parish Social Action Center is one of the commitment of Fr. Dan for Lake Bato Management. The office of the BFAR Regional Director, Jim dela Vega also expressed his commitment to help LBRMP.

With the formulation of the LBRMP Strategic Action Program (SAP) from the previous result of the different trainings conducted, and the linkage building capability of the Local Government Units, the Technical Working Group are now equipped with program strategies towards sustainable development of Lake Bato resources.

